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# Gender Perspective on Child Custody Decisions and Enforcement Problems: An Analysis of Decision Number 566/Pdt.G/2021/PA.Prg

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The hadanah regulation in the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) explains that children who are not yet mumayyiz are under the custody of their mother. Even though custody rights in Decision Number 566/Pdt.G/2021/PA.Prg is determined as stipulated in the KHI: the husband (reconvention defendant) is reluctant to carry out the contents of the quo decision, which results in one of the children being under his care. This is an anomaly in the general view regarding the dichotomy of men's and women's roles.

Using a socio-legal approach, this research seeks to avoid the reductionist character that simplifies hadanah disputes into binary categories between compliance and non-compliance with legal provisions and judge's decisions, as well as placing the custody issue into the ongoing social context. Using gender theory and maqasid sharia, this research will dissect the judge's considerations in Decision Number 566/Pdt.G/2021/PA.Prg and their relationship to non-compliance with the quo decision.

Based on gender theory, the meaning is that the quo dispute was born simultaneously as awareness of women's involvement in earning a living and of men's participation in caregiving. In its considerations, the assembly was trapped in the social construct of gender roles. The husband's disobedience can be understood as an implication of being disconnected from the judge's considerations from the ongoing social context, where the patriarchal family system, characterized by a dichotomous model of gender roles, is experiencing fragility. Meanwhile, from the analysis of maqasid sharia, it was found that the unequal distribution of happiness (maslahah) desired by maqasid sharia gives rise to a sense of injustice. The logical consequence is that the party who feels burdened with "pain," namely the husband, is reluctant to comply with the quo decision because it does not represent justice and benefit.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the consequences of divorce is the emergence of child control rights (hadanah). Hadanah is regulated in Presidential Instruction Number 1 of 1991 concerning the Dissemination of the Compilation of Islamic Law, which determines that caring for children who are not mumayyiz or under 12 years old is the mother's right. Meanwhile, if the child has mumayyiz, the custody choice is left to the child. And responsibility for living is borne by the father (1).

This division of tasks can be simplified into material and non-material divisions. Material responsibility is the father's responsibility for the child's support. Meanwhile, non-material responsibilities are the mother's responsibility in caring for children. However, in practice, child custody disputes are not just a matter of dividing material and non-material tasks. Furthermore, child custody disputes often break down the barriers that limit the differences between the two. As the party who is considered responsible for living and is weak

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in parenting, the husband (father) often demands that the court hand over custody of the child to him, so it is not uncommon for such efforts to become protracted disputes that must be resolved at the cassation level.

Referring to the hadanah articles, the Compilation of Islamic Law constructs the role of the father as being more inclined toward matters of subsistence (production) while depicting the role of the mother as a caretaker and caretaker (reproduction) who has minimal involvement in production work in the public sector. Such differences bring severe consequences for both of them when the marriage breaks up. Fathers face a dilemma because they are deemed unfit to be good caregivers and caretakers for their children, and mothers play a dual role as caregivers and breadwinners. Because it is difficult to deny that social changes have increased the participation and involvement of women (mothers) in the public sector (especially in earning a living). As well as encouraging the role of men (fathers) to be involved in child care and domestic work. Such changes conflict with the social image of the role and position of husband and wife, which are separated by public and domestic spaces (2).

Simply put, the view of the distinction between the public and domestic sectors has slowly been abandoned and replaced by a more egalitarian order as offered by the neoliberal capitalist regime, where women are considered to have the right to earn a living just like men. On the other hand, this kind of thinking creates a caring crisis in the household, which causes the parenting function to be neglected. The regulations regarding gifts in the Compilation of Islamic Law do not anticipate changes of this kind. The arrangement of Madinah is still in the shadow of the distinction between public space and domestic space, which marks the father's and mother's duties separately. This also applies to the social image of roles in the household, where men are seen as actors in public life, while women are seen in domestic life.

It is not surprising that child custody disputes grow into complicated conflicts in terms of enforcement. Even though the court has determined which party has the right to receive custody of the child, it is not uncommon for the parties involved in the case to be reluctant to carry out the decision, which is deemed not to satisfy expectations of justice. It must be acknowledged that law enforcement that does not accommodate the interests of society and the social changes that occur will be difficult to enforce and may not even be justified. This complexity occurred, for example, when Decision Number 566/Pdt.G/2021/PA.Prg was challenging to execute.

Efforts are needed to explain some problems that form symptoms of "disobedience" to court decisions. Using a socio-legal approach, this research will avoid the reductionist character that simplifies hadanah disputes into a binary view of compliance and non-compliance with legal provisions and judge's decisions, as well as placing the custody issue into the ongoing social context. Using gender theory and maqasid sharia, this research will dissect the judge's considerations in Decision Number 566/Pdt.G/2021/PA.Prg and their relationship to difficulties in enforcing this decision.

## 2. REVIEW OF THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

There are two theories used in this research, namely gender theory and maqasid sharia.

# 2.1. Gender

Gender is often considered a women's problem only. This misunderstanding occurs because gender is always associated with sex, specifically for women. Even though gender and sex are two different things (3). Gender is a characteristic inherent in men and women which is socially and culturally constructed (4). Meanwhile, gender is a difference in human classification based on biological organs between men and women, especially in the reproductive area (5).

As a result of social construction and cultural engineering, gender is acquired through a process of "learning" or internalization through tiered socialization over a long period. In principle, the characters attached to the concept of gender can be identified as the result of social and cultural construction, are not natural, can change, and can be exchanged, depending on time and local culture.

The gender perspective in this research, therefore, is directed at highlighting aspects of social construction that are absent in the issue of hadanah and are rarely involved, namely the distinction between the areas of responsibility of husband and wife towards children in legal regulations and the judge's considerations which are the reasons why the law of hadanah is slowly becoming a legal problem, which is not easy to enforce.

### 2.2. Magasid Syariah

Maqashid shari'ah can be interpreted as the values and meanings that are the goals and will be realized by the maker of shari'ah (Allah SWT) behind the making of shari'ah and law, which mujtahid scholars research from shari'ah texts.

The content of maqashid sharia is a benefit (6). This, for example, is in line with the words of Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziah in his book I'lamu Al-muwaqqi'iin. He said that the principle of the Shari'ah is for the benefit of human life in the present life (world) and the life to come (hereafter). At-Tufī, as quoted by Kamal Muchtar, defines maṣlaḥaḥ as a state of being in perfect form according to the purpose, use, and function of

an item. In other words, something maṣlaḥaḥ means that it is in good condition, complete, functional, and valuable according to the purpose of the article being made and does not cause damage or destruction.

According to Al-Khawārizmī, maṣlaḥaḥ is the maintenance of the meaning of syara' by rejecting damage to creatures (humans). This opinion shows that maṣlaḥaḥ is based on sharia standards, not human reason. Slightly different from Al-Khawārizmī, in its development, ideas emerged that attempted to reformulate the theory of maṣlaḥaḥ following the needs of the times. Muhammad Roy Purwanto believes that maṣlaḥaḥ should be explored and given a new place in Islamic law through three new epistemologies in the form of reason, human values, and qath'i texts.

The Maşlaḥaḥ offered by Roy contains an attempt to reposition Islamic theology from theocentric, as discussed by classical scholars, to moving towards anthropocentric, which is considered more capable of adapting to changing times. Roy wrote:

"...The concept of maṣlaḥaḥ must be reformulated from a theocentric ideology to an anthropocentric one, namely maṣlaḥaḥ which is not based on the intention of (maqshud al-syari'), but the intention of themukallaf (maqshud al-mukallaf), because in matters of muamalah and custom, humans are the ones who "understand" himself better in the context of his life, compared to the text of Allah, which was revealed in the past, under different conditions."

Furthermore, maṣlaḥaḥ, with an anthropocentric ideology, adopts human values such as freedom, equality, justice, and democracy as sources of benefit and incorporates these values into the concepts of dharuriyat, hajiyat, and tahsiniyat. Apart from that, a reconstruction allows the idea of dharuriyat to contain universal human values, as mentioned previously. This is different from the classical view, which places the protection of religion, soul, reason, lineage, and property into the concept of dharuriyat.

For this research, the concept of human values—especially justice—offered by Roy as universal human values that occupy the position of dharuriyat in maqashid sharia will be used to review this research. This is because the values provided by Roy have a broader public and social impact than individual/personal ones, as per the concept of dharuriyat in classical thought. This means that the idea of maqashid shari'ah in this research, especially the value of justice, will consider the public impact of the research object being reviewed.

#### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following describes the main points of case number 566/Pdt.G/2021/PA.Prg:

In the consideration section, the panel of judges explained that the Plaintiff demanded custody (hadanah rights) of the two children of the Plaintiff and Defendant named Ashabul Kahffi binti Syaharuddin, aged six years, and Ersyah Nur Syafirah binti Syaharuddin, aged five years so that they would be in the custody of the Plaintiff;

To the Plaintiff's lawsuit, Defendant answered that regarding custody of his two children, the Plaintiff should not be selfish by imposing the Plaintiff's wishes or persuasion from the Plaintiff's own family because it could affect the two children. After all, both children can choose wherever they feel comfortable, then the Defendant, in principle, for the child's good, the first child lives with the Defendant, and the second child lives with the Plaintiff.

Then the panel of judges considered that the children named Ashabul Kahffi bint Syaharuddin, aged six years, and Ersyah Nur Syafirah bint Syaharuddin, aged five years, were judged by the panel to be mumayyiz, and all this time, the two children had been in the care of the Plaintiff as their mother, even though the first child was sometimes there with the Defendant as the father, and during the trial the Plaintiff as the biological mother was not proven to have neglected her obligations or misbehaved towards her child.

Based on the provisions of Article 105 letter (a) of the Compilation of Islamic Law, which states that children who are not yet mumayyiz or not yet 12 years old have the right of their mother to care for and care for them, children at that age are seen to need their mother more in the needs of the child's growth and development, on the other hand the Plaintiff as a mother, normatively a mother is seen as more precise and more skilled in caring for her child than a father;

Basically, according to the panel, there is nothing that should be questioned about the two children of Plaintiff and Defendant because all this time, the two children have lived and been cared for by Plaintiff as their mother even though sometimes the first child goes with the Defendant as their father, on the other hand, both the Plaintiff and the Defendant a good and responsible person who has never been involved in things that endanger the lives and future of his two children. So, the panel of judges stated that the Plaintiff's lawsuit to obtain custody should be granted.

Even though legally, Plaintiff is designated as the holder of custody of the two children of Plaintiff and Defendant, for the benefit of the children, Defendant is still given the right to express his love for his children. Likewise, the Plaintiff must not deliberately prohibit or obstruct the children's rights. For the Defendant to meet each other, the two of them must not sever the friendly relationship with the Defendant as his biological father, and the Defendant has the right to visit, visit, meet, and show affection as a father towards his child.

Then in its decision, the panel of judges determined that the children named Ashabul Kaffi bin Syaharuddin and Ersyah Nur Syafira bint Syaharuddin—the children of the Plaintiff and Defendant—were under the guidance of the Plaintiff, namely his wife.

# 3.1. Gender Anomaly

Decision Number 566/Pdt.G/2021/PA. The above is in line with Article 105 letter (a), which states that children under 12 years of age or not yet mumayyiz are under the mother's care. The regulations in the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) form a dichotomy in the roles of father and mother in the household as regulated in Article 105. The image built in such legal regulations also legitimizes the social idea of gender dichotomy in society. On the other hand, the penetration of neoliberal capitalism has brought an attractive offer where women have the same rights to work as men.

In fact, with the emergence of giant companies that are solely profit-oriented, workers are paid low wages for company profits. This requires both men and women to be involved in earning a living. This means that the shaky gender identity that defines women in the domestic sphere combines the penetration of ideology that offers egalitarianism and the pressure of circumstances that push women "out of the kitchen."

These consequences have implications for decreasing the intensity of time, energy, and attention in the household, including caregiving. At the same time, awareness is growing regarding shared responsibility. In parenting, for example, husband and wife are required to share roles. Parenting is no longer solely the wife's responsibility but also the husband's responsibility. If earning a living is done together, then so is caregiving. What is impacted by the shift in gender roles (mothers who make a living) is the emergence of a crisis regarding the quality of child care in patriarchal families. Such conditions then encourage men as fathers to carry out domestic responsibilities as a shared responsibility. This is also an effort to suppress women's "misfortune" in the household.

Conditions where women carry out a dual role as those responsible for domestic work and breadwinners, constitute conditions of injustice and discrimination if such responsibilities are not placed as shared responsibilities. Here, it must be understood that the public-domestic dichotomy to separate the roles of husband and wife obscures the pattern or cycle of inequality between men and women in the household. For this reason, Susan Moller Okin said that men and women have full humanity and must be treated fairly.

In the context of this discussion, justice, as intended by Okin, can be achieved by breaking down the dividing boundaries that become sites of oppression against women, which give rise to injustice in the household, namely the gender construct of the dichotomy of responsibility. So, in the social context of realizing humanist justice, which characterizes full humanity, the issues of hadanah disputes, including case 566/Pdt.G/2021/PA.Prg needs to be placed.

This is seen in the quo decision, where the husband and wife both work (earn a living), and the husband also tries to take care of his children, as described in the discussion above. Such conditions show that the context of the problem absent from the panel's consideration is that those in dispute in the quo decision should be understood in a full humanitarian context. Both husband and wife want to care for their children instinctively as parents. It's not just placed in the binary lens of legal regulations, between who cares and who provides support.

The logic of maternal care alone as a gender construct that has long existed in society caused by the dichotomy of responsibilities is considered, as quoted below.

Based on the provisions of Article 105 letter (a) of the Compilation of Islamic Law, which states that children who are not mumayyiz or not yet 12 years old have the right of their mother to care for them, moreover, children at that age are seen as needing their mother more in the needs of the child's growth and development, on the other hand The plaintiff as a mother, normatively a mother is seen as more precise and more skilled in caring for her child than a father;

The emergence of the perception of a mother's diligence in parenting cannot be separated from the dichotomy of gender roles in a patriarchal society. The normative assumption, as explained in the judge's consideration above, has been refuted by various studies which reject the dominant discourse that mothers play an important role in children's growth and development. One of them is research conducted by Ajeng Teni Nur Afriliani, Vina Adriany, and Hani Yulindrasari, which shows that fathers can be the primary caregivers in the family without mothers who have been idealized as caregivers. This research also dismantles the notion that men are inappropriate and unable to care for young children. Parenting skills are not skills that are inherent to a specific gender or are innate from birth, but rather skills that are formed when someone has the desire to learn and apply them in everyday life.

The findings in the research above align with the character of gender, namely that one of them is interchangeable with the other. Where everything attached to gender identity is not fixed, the domestic role assigned to women can be interchanged with the public part given to men. Women can also work well and earn a living just like men do. Vice versa, the caring role assigned to women can be exchanged with men. Simply put, women can do work that is considered men's work. On the other hand, men can also do work that is regarded as women's work. Because gender construction is not natural, hadanah is not a unique ability

possessed by women alone but is the result of the socialization process in society and the family environment.

It is unsurprising that decision number 566/Pdt.G/2021/PA.Prg experienced problems in enforcing the decision, where the father, as the Reconvention Defendant, was reluctant to carry out the contents of the decision. It turns out that the role of gender in considering the quo decision is unwilling to be accepted as the correct truth. As a result, the decision appears not to meet the litigants' needs and sense of justice. This is because such decisions are disconnected from the ongoing social context, where the patriarchal family system, characterized by a dichotomous model of gender roles, is experiencing fragility.

#### 3.2. Reinterpreting the Meaning of the Text

Basically, according to the panel, there is nothing that should be disputed regarding the gift for the two children of Plaintiff and Defendant "because all this time the two children have lived and been cared for by the Plaintiff as their mother, although sometimes the first child goes with the Defendant as their father." The parenting conditions carried out so far are considered normal by the judges. So, if the award rests with the mother as the plaintiff, it will not give rise to significant problems. The judge believes that, due to the absence of the issues on the part of each party, the child's interests will not be harmed.

"On the other hand, both the Plaintiff and the Defendant are good and responsible people and have never been involved in things that endanger the lives and future of their two children." However, such considerations were immediately followed by a statement granting the claim of the plaintiff as mother:

"So the panel of judges stated that the Plaintiff's lawsuit to obtain custody should be granted."

This means that, even though it appears to be considering both parties, the panel of judges is considering whether there is a "defect" in the plaintiff that could cause the award to fall into the hands of the defendant. This shows that the principle of the child's best interests, which is understood by the panel of judges, is to ensure that the child is under the custody of a party who will not harm him. When it was confirmed that both parties would not cause harm or become a problem for the two children, the panel of judges returned its considerations to legal regulations regulated in Article 105 of the KHI. This was proven, as explained above. After considering the conditions of both parties, the panel continued with a statement granting the plaintiff's claim as a mother, even though it was acknowledged that both parties could equally be responsible as caregivers.

This model of consideration should be appreciated. However, this also opens up opportunities for problems to arise. Because, if we look back, both parties want custody of the child. This can be seen in the answer submitted by the defendant to the reconvention lawsuit:

"...that regarding the custody of his two children, the Plaintiff must not be selfish by imposing the Plaintiff's own will or persuasion from the Plaintiff's own family because it could affect the two children, because both children have the right to make their own choices wherever they feel comfortable, then in principle the Defendant "With the goodness of the child, the first child lives with the Defendant and the second child lives with the Plaintiff."

In the answer above, the defendant tried to find a middle ground for the dispute between the two by jointly caring for a child so that each of them would get custody. However, such an intermediate course is contrary to Article 105 of the KHI, which stipulates that the two children are under the guidance of their mother. However, this also leads to "disobedience" to the court's decision because the decision is deemed not to fulfill the hope of obtaining justice.

However, how can it be possible to realize a sense of justice for all parties? In disputes, the defeated party often considers the decision handed down by the judge as a decision that does not contain justice because it does not meet their needs. Meanwhile, in the context of the decision above, the defeated party considers that it would be fair if the gift of children were determined for both parties - where the first child is under the custody of the defendant, while the second child is under the control of the plaintiff. As mentioned above, the defendant's demands are contrary to the regulations regarding hadanah in the Compilation of Islamic Law - as a reference for Indonesian Figh.

However, Islamic law was revealed inseparably from the social conditions behind it, so understanding it cannot be separated from the social aspects of the society where it was announced. Islamic law was revealed for the benefit of humans to create miracles in human life as the purpose of sharia law. If Islamic law does not bring benefits, then its enforcement has moved away from the intent of sharia law (maqashid sharia).

Meanwhile, it is simultaneously known that all Sharia rules have a purpose behind their enactment. In this context, what Muhammad Roy offers finds relevance, namely an attempt to reposition Islamic theology from theocentric, moving towards anthropocentric, which is considered more capable of adapting to changing times and human interests in the current era.

The current social context, as stated previously, is the emergence of fragility in the patriarchal family system, characterized by a dichotomous model of gender roles. The fragility in question is the growth of a more egalitarian consciousness offered by neoliberal capitalism and household demands that force women to

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be involved in production work and awareness about the husband's involvement in domestic affairs—previously considered the wife's duty. This has brought a new perspective to society on family relations, where husbands can and are capable of caregiving, which was previously considered only qualified or more appropriate for wives.

The consequences of anthropocentric theology in such a social context encourage a new interpretation of the concept of hadanah in the Compilation of Islamic Law. Roy offers a maslahah based on utilitarianism ethics to interpret the maslahah as the primary goal of sharia law (maqashid sharia). In utilitarianism, actions or rules of action that are considered morally right are "those that best support the happiness of all those concerned" or "act in such a way that the consequences of the action are beneficial for all those concerned." So, utilitarianism is more concerned with the consequences of an action.

Furthermore, Roy said two things can be understood from the ethical-based principle of maslahah, namely, first, the morality of an action is measured by the extent to which it is directed towards benefit. Second, the character is directed towards happiness, which consists of feelings of pleasure and freedom from pain.

Suppose understood in the context of case number 566/Pdt.G/2021/PA.Prg, then the parties who are the subject of benefits are the child, mother, and father. So, the purpose of regulating hadanah must be understood as a rule that aims to bring maximum happiness to all parties. Thus, enforcing the hadanah law does not just result in enforcing the legal text in the form of article 105 but goes further than that, namely implementing the intent of such a rule in the state of happiness for the parties and freeing them from pain.

In its considerations, the panel of judges stated that both parents—the child's father and mother—were responsible parents. So, it doesn't matter if both of them get custody. Moreover, it is known that the first child is sometimes with his father. The problem is, if we examine it from the problematic principle offered by Roy, the decision of the panel of judges to hand over the two children to their mother allows for pain to arise for one of the parties because the two children are being cared for solely by the mother. Thus, this is contrary to the morality of actions that avoid pain, as written above. This shows that the greatest happiness in maslahah is only aimed at mothers and children. This unequal distribution of happiness triggers a sense of injustice in the decision in case number 566/Pdt.G/2021/PA.Prg. The logical consequence is that the party who feels burdened with "pain," namely the husband, is reluctant to comply with the decision because it does not represent justice.

The submission of the quo decision to the text - article 105 KHI, shows that the concept of hadanah moves behind the social changes taking place in society. At the same time, it legitimizes the classical view regarding gender discourse in the household, which is increasingly fragile in the community.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Non-compliance with decision number 566/Pdt.G/2021/PA.Prg is not just a matter of banality and egoism of the litigants. To understand the problem as a whole, the social context needs to be brought into focus. The dispute in the quo case was born simultaneously as awareness of women's involvement in earning a living and men's participation in caregiving. The absence of the judge's consideration of the ongoing social conditions causes disputes in the binary lens of legal regulations between who takes care of them and who provides support. At the same time, I hope that the litigants will abandon the growing awareness of ongoing social changes.

The lack of understanding of gender discourse in decisions causes the panel's deliberations to be trapped in the social construct of separate roles and responsibilities of husband and wife, between public and domestic spaces, and between responsibility for living and caregiving responsibilities. This logic is not appropriate to apply to parties who are both breadwinners, and both want to carry out caring roles. Gender roles that construct considerations for the quo decision are ultimately reluctant to be accepted for granted by the party who feels disadvantaged. As a result, the decision appears not to meet the litigants' needs and sense of justice. This is because such decisions are disconnected from the ongoing social context, where the patriarchal family system, characterized by a dichotomous model of gender roles, is experiencing fragility.

The meaning of maqasid from the hadanah concept relevant to the ongoing social context requires a shift in the maslahah paradigm from a theocentric to an anthropocentric one. This is intended to ensure that litigants feel they are being given a sense of justice by enforcing maqasid aspects in the rule of law. Thus, implementing the hadanah law does not just result in enforcing the legal text in article 105 but goes further than that, namely enforcing happiness for the parties and freeing them from pain.

Giving custody of the child to the reconvention plaintiff shows that the greatest happiness is only aimed at the mother and child, not the father. This unequal distribution of happiness triggers a sense of injustice in the decision in case number 566/Pdt.G/2021/PA.Prg. The logical consequence is that the party who feels burdened with "pain," namely the husband, is reluctant to comply with the decision because it is deemed not to reflect the justice promised in the maqashid sharia.

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